

# Allocation of Seats to Committees for 2024/25

## Full Council Thursday, 23 May 2024

Report of: Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer

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Purpose: For decision

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Publication status: Open

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Wards affected: All

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### Executive summary:

This report has been prepared to enable the Council to appoint its committees for the forthcoming municipal year, including the allocation of seats in accordance with political balance requirements.

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**This report supports the Council's priority of:** Building a better Council

### Contact officers

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### Recommendation to Council:

That the Council's committees for 2024/25, and the number of seats allocated to each committee, be as per the table in paragraph 4.3.

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## **Introduction and background**

- 1 In accordance with legislation and the Council's Constitution, this is a report to the Annual Meeting which sets out the political balance of the Council and matters relating to the allocation and appointment of Members to the Council's committees for the 2024/25 municipal year (the period between the Annual Meetings in May 2024 and May 2025).
- 2 The Council's Standing Order 14 states that, "*the Council shall, at the Annual Meeting, appoint ..... Committees .... which it is deemed necessary to appoint*".
- 3 The Council currently has eight committees and three sub-committees, identified within the constitution as follows. It is proposed that these be retained for 2024/25, i.e.:

### **Policy Committees:**

Community Services

Housing

Planning Policy

Strategy & Resources

- Chief Officer Sub-Committee
- Investment Sub-Committee

### **Regulatory / Statutory / other committees:**

Audit & Scrutiny

Licensing

- Licensing Sub-Committee

Planning

Standards

4. Political balance requirements of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989

4.1 As a result of the 2024 District elections, the political composition of the Council is as follows:

<b>Political Groups</b>	<b>No. of Councillors</b>	<b>% of available committee seats which the Council should aim to allocate</b> (No. of Cllrs in previous col. ÷ 43)
Residents' Alliance	20	46.5%
Liberal Democrats	11	25.6%
Conservatives	7	16.3%
Independent Group	5	11.6%

4.2 Section 15 of the Act deals with the duty to allocate seats on committees to political groups. Such allocations, so far as is reasonably practicable, must be made in accordance with the following four principles:

- (a) not all the seats on an ordinary committee should be allocated to the same political group;
- (b) a political group with an overall council majority should receive a majority of the allocated seats;
- (c) subject to (a) and (b) above, the number of seats on the total of all the ordinary committees allocated to each political group should bear the same proportion as that for the Full Council; and
- (d) subject to (a) to (c) above, the number of seats on each ordinary committee allocated to each political group should bear the same proportion as that for the Full Council.

4.3 Applying these rules, the table below sets out the Administration's proposed allocation for 2024/25:

'Ordinary' Committees:	<b>Political Groups</b> (allocations for 23/24 are shown in brackets)				<b>Total membership</b>
	Residents' Alliance	Liberal Democrat	Conservative	Independent Group	
<b>Audit &amp; Scrutiny</b>	<b>4(4)</b>	<b>3(3)</b>	<b>1(3)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>9(11)</b>
<b>Community Services</b>	<b>6(5)</b>	<b>3(3)</b>	<b>2(3)</b>	<b>2(1)</b>	<b>13(12)</b>
<b>Housing</b>	<b>5(5)</b>	<b>3(3)</b>	<b>2(3)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>11(12)</b>
<b>Licensing</b>	<b>5(5)</b>	<b>3(3)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>11(11)</b>
<b>Planning</b>	<b>6(5)</b>	<b>2(3)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>11(11)</b>
<b>Planning Policy</b>	<b>5(5)</b>	<b>3(3)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>11(11)</b>
<b>Standards</b>	<b>3(3)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>7(7)</b>
<b>Strategy &amp; Resources</b>	<b>6(5)</b>	<b>3(3)</b>	<b>2 (3)</b>	<b>2(1)</b>	<b>13(12)</b>
<b>Total seats on Committees</b>	<b>40(37)</b>	<b>22(23)</b>	<b>14(19)</b>	<b>10(8)</b>	<b>86(87)</b>

4.4 This allocation exactly matches the target distribution of seats referred to in 4.1 above, i.e.:

<b>RA</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>IG</b>
46.5%	25.6%	16.3%	11.6%

## 5. Sub-Committees and Working Groups

5.1 Sub-committees and working groups have not formed part of the calculations referred to in 4.2 above and the following allocation of seats is proposed:

<b>Sub-Committees</b> (parent Committee in brackets)	<b>Political Groups</b> (allocations for 23/24 in brackets)				Total membership
	<b>Residents' Alliance</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Ind Group</b>	
Chief Officer (S&R)	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>		<b>4(4)</b>
Investment (S&R)	<b>3(3)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(2)</b>	<b>1(0)</b>	<b>7(7)</b>
Licensing (Licensing) (These are the three principal seats on the Sub-Committee – substitutes for hearings, if required, are fielded from the parent (Licensing) Committee, regardless of political grouping).	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>		<b>3(3)</b>

<b>Working Groups</b> (parent Committee in brackets)	<b>Political Groups</b> (allocations for 23/24 in brackets)				Total membership
	<b>Residents' Alliance</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Con</b>	<b>Ind Group</b>	
CIL (Planning Policy)	<b>4(4)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>8(9)</b>
Climate Change (S&R)	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>7(7)</b>
Community Grants (Community Services)	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>5(5)</b>
Planning Policy (Planning Policy)	<b>4(3)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>8(8)</b>
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (Community Services)	<b>4(4)</b>	<b>2(2)</b>	<b>1(2)</b>	<b>1(1)</b>	<b>8(9)</b>

5.2 These allocations will be determined by the respective parent committees at their short meetings immediately after Annual Council. Committees may appoint further sub-committees and working groups during the course of the year if they wish.

## 6. Membership of Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups

6.1 Group Leaders have been contacted and have been asked to provide the names of members that they wish to nominate to sit on the Council's committees, sub-committees and working groups in accordance with their allocations. This information will be circulated prior to the meeting.

## **Key implications**

### **Comments of the Chief Finance Officer**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **Comments of the Head of Legal Services**

Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989('the Act') places a duty on the Council to review the representation of political groups on its committee where the members of the committees are split into different political groups.

The Act requires that the Council should allocate seats on committees in accordance with the principles set out in 3.2 of this report.

There is no legal requirement for the Chairs or Vice Chairs of any committee to be reserved for members of any particular group.

Failure to allocate seats in line with these principles would be in breach of statutory requirements and may result in error or legal challenge.

The proposals set out in this report comply with the Council's Constitution.

### **Equality**

The Council's duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act 2010') is to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct prohibited under the Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

There are no direct impacts of the recommendation associated with this report.

## **Climate change**

There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

## **Background papers**

None

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